



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

March 19, 2014

Senator Terry Gerratana, Co-Chair Public Health Committee
Representative Philip Miller, Co-Chair Public Health Committee
Senator Jason Welch, Ranking Member Public Health Committee
Representative Prasad Srinivasan, Ranking Member Public Health Committee

Members of the Public Health Committee,

Raised Senate Bill #439 – AAC RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

My name is Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. Our Association represents more than 26,000 paid and volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. I would like to comment on the subject bill on the agenda for today's public hearing.

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association would like to voice our opposition to Section #1 (LCO #2388) of this bill. We must **OPPOSE** Section #1 if the Fire Service is to perform our proper level of service. Connecticut General Statute 7-313e, AUTHORITY OF FIRE OFFICER DURING EMERGENCY virtually requires the fire officer-in-charge to take control of the emergency scene to which the fire department or company is called. It is our opinion that the first part of Section #1 which states "No person shall hinder or interfere with a provider...." could be interpreted to mean that if the Incident Commander of an emergency scene "hinders or interferes" with an EMS provider entering an unsafe area, under control of the Incident Commander, that Commander would be in violation of this act. Section #1 is too loosely written to be effective legislation in light of current legislation. We would also question the **NEED** for this legislation. Upon asking the proponents of this legislation for instances of concerns, they do not appear to be able to document any violations.

There cannot be two (2) individuals in-charge of emergency scenes. One and only one designated commander must maintain control of an emergency scene. Emergency scenes are chaotic enough without adding to that chaos. The primary task is life safety. That starts with the life safety of the first responders as well as the victims. We cannot help the victims if our own safety is compromised. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is an important part of the first responder community. We must all work within the necessary protocols of the emergency services. CGS 7-313e has been statute since 1977 and has worked well for the State to now. Fire Service, Police Service, Electric companies, Gas companies, and other utilities have all recognized this statutory authority and accept it. Any deviation from this protocol could create a situation where command is not clear and the safety of the responders and the public erodes.

It has also been brought to our attention some concerns within Section #2 of this bill. It has been mentioned that under certain conditions, the language of this bill could override the municipal control from the incident commander of that community to a private civilian EMS control. We do not feel that we can support either portion of this bill **AS CURRENTLY WRITTEN** without some major language changes.

Respectfully,

Ted Schroll Jr.

Ted Schroll Jr., Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association

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